



# Containing Nationalism

*Michael Hechter*

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## **Containing Nationalism** Michael Hechter

Nationalism has become the most prevalent source of political conflict and violence in the world today. Scholarship has provided scant guidance for containing the dark side of nationalism--its widely publicized excesses of violence, such as ethnic cleansing and genocide. Based on fundamental theoretical ideas about the formation and solidarity of groups, *Containing Nationalism* offers a groundbreaking unified explanation of the dynamics of nationalism across the broad sweep of history and geography. Michael Hechter argues that the impetus for the most common type of nationalism arises from the imposition of direct rule in culturally heterogeneous societies--stimulating national identity, reducing the resources of local elites, motivating the mobilization of nationalist opposition to central authorities, and ultimately heightening the demand for sovereignty. Hechter suggests that political institutions that reintroduce indirect rule offer the leaders of modern countries the best available means of containing nationalist violence within their borders.

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